

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 02371 040919Z

21

ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5475

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, PINT, PINS, PFOR, TU, CY

SUBJECT: TURKISH PRIMIN ECEVIT SPEAKS ON CYPRUS: TURKISH ECONOMY

SUMMARY: PRIMIN ECEVIT'S FIRST SPEECH IN ISTANBUL SINCE
TAKING OFFICE DEVOTED TO CYPRUS AND DOMESTIC ECONOMIC
PROBLEMS. ECEVIT APPARENTLY HOPING "WAR HERO" IMAGE
WILL OFFSET CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE.
END SUMMARY

1. IN FIRST SPEECH IN ISTANBUL SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE, PRIMIN
ECEVIT SEPT. 2 DEFENDED TURKISH ROLE IN CYPRUS, SAYING THAT
THANKS TO MILITARY ACTION A "NEW CYPRUS WAS BEING BORN".
ECEVIT, CITING INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM THAT GOT HAD "GONE TOO
FAR" IN CYPRUS, SAID THAT THOSE WHO CRITICIZE TURKEY HAD DONE
NOTHING FOR ELEVEN YEARS, WHILE THE CYPRIOT CONSTITUTION WAS BEING
VIOLATED AND TURKISH CYPRIOTS WERE TORTURED AND MURDERED.
ALTHOUGH HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE JUST AND UNDERSTANDING,
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PAGE 02 ISTANB 02371 040919Z

IT WOULD NOT COMPROMISE ON BASIC ISSUE: TURKEY

WOULD NOT SAY ITS "DUTY IS DONE" UNTIL REGIME IS ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE "LASTING PEACE AND SECURITY" TO BOTH TURKISH AND GREEK CYPRIOTS.

2. COMMENTING ON ALLEGED MASSACRES BY GREEK CYPRIOTS, ECEVIT SAID "TRUE HEROISM DOES NOT CONSIST OF SHOOTING INNOCENT AND UNARMED PEOPLE, OF KILLING CHILDREN AND BURYING THEM IN A HOLE, OR OF MURDERING A BLINDFOLDED JOURNALIST." HE ALSO COUNTERED CRITICISM THAT TURKEY BE MORE FLEXIBLE TO ALLOW GREEK DEMOCRACY TO FLOWER, BY ARGUING THAT IF TURKEY HAD NOT ACTED AT PROPER MOMENT AGAINST JUNTA'S "MADNESS", THE JUNTA DICTATORSHIP MIGHT WELL HAVE CONTINUED.

3. IN DISCUSSING DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS OF CYPRUS DEVELOPMENTS, ECEVIT LAUDED TURKISH DEMOCRACY FOR HAVING PASSED A CRITICAL TEST. HE CITED COOPERATION OF OPPOSITION PARTIES AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES AS EVIDENCE THAT POLITICAL AND MILITARY POWER COULD FUNCTION "IN COMPLETE HARMONY". WHILE NOTING THAT OPPOSITION CRITICISM OF COALITION'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE DID NOT DIMINISH HIS GRATITUDE FOR THEIR COOPERATION, ECEVIT USED SPEECH TO DEFEND GOVT'S ECONOMIC RECORD. HE STATED THAT DESPITE CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF CYPRUS OPERATION, THERE HAD BEEN NO RISE IN COST OF LIVING NOR ANY SHORTAGE OF BASIC COMMODITIES SINCE MILITARY ACTION UNDERTAKEN. REMAINDER OF SPEECH DEVOTED TO NEED TO FIGHT ECONOMIC "WAR" AND IMPROVE SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ECEVIT WAS SPEAKING IN HIS RECENTLY WON ROLE AS NATIONAL HERO AND STATESMAN, HE DID NOT NEGLECT HIS DUTIES AS REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) LEADER. THE EVENT, ATTENDED BY AN ESTIMATED 40,000 PERSONS, WAS RPP DOMINATED. SHARING THE PLATFORM WITH ECEVIT WERE LOCAL RPP CHAIRMAN KOTIL ALONG WITH MAYOR, FONMIN GUNES AND DEFMIN ISIK, ALL ACTIVE RPP POLITICANS. TOGETHER WITH ECEVIT, CROWD HAILED GUNES AND ISIK AS "HEROES". ECEVIT'S DEFENSE OF HIS ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE -- A DEFENSE CLEARLY MADE IN RESPONSE TO JUSTICE PARTY (JP) LEADER DEMIREL'S CHARGE AUGUST 31 THAT GOVERNMENT HAD LED COUNTRY INTO AN "ERA OF SHORTAGE AND RATIONING" -- SUGGESTS THAT RPP REALIZES IT VULNERABLE TO ATTACK ON THIS POINT. WHILE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ISTANB 02371 040919Z

MODESTLY TURNING AWAY PRAISE, ECEVIT APPEARS TO BE COUNTING ON HIS "HERO IMAGE" TO OFFSET ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION TO SUBSTANTIAL PRICE INCREASES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED DURING SEVEN MONTHS THAT RPP HAS BEEN IN POWER.
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